

OTHS BASEBALL HISTORY

1901-1926

On April 12, 1902 the baseball team defeated a "pick-up" team 13-12. Prof. Wilton would like to schedule games with Belleville, Lebanon and Mascoutah. In May 1902, the public schools baseball team defeated Lebanon 25-20 and Collinsville 16-9.

Another game was played against Lebanon on June 6, 1902 with O'Fallon winning by the score of 16-5. In all probability, some upper grade boys played on the team with the high school players since this was the first year of high school and enrollment was small.

During September 1908, a three game series with Collinsville was played. O'Fallon won 8-4, but lost the other two games by the scores of 7-6 and 6-4. Since Collinsville won the series they carried home the bats and balls which the merchants of O'Fallon donated as a prize for the winners.

The best record in baseball competition during the first twenty-five years of O'Fallon High School was compiled during the 1921-22 season when O'Fallon finished second in the Mascoutah-Trenton-Lebanon-O'Fallon League with a 5-1 record.

1926-1951

Five conference championships were achieved by the baseball Panthers from 1926 through 1951. The 1931-32 team with a record of 5-2 tied for the championships. The 1936-37 team and the 1950-51 team finished with 6-0 and 9-0 records. The 1945-46 team won the championship with an 8-2 record in the fall and also was the first team to play a schedule in the spring. Since football was not played in the Cahokia Conference in those days, baseball was usually played in the fall and track in the spring. However, some year's baseball was played during both seasons.

Through the years O'Fallon has had many talented players. George Bender, Class of 1937, probably was the player who advanced the farthest in professional play. He was signed by the St. Louis Browns organization and in 1939 had a pitching record of 20-4 and batted .305 for Fayetteville, Arkansas at the Arkansas-Missouri League. In 1940 he reported to the San Antonio Browns. His career, like many others was delayed and shorten by World War II. Other outstanding players who played minor league or semi-pro base ball were Robert "Monk" Million, Class of 1935; Howard "Domie" Taylor, Class of 1927, Del "Strawberry" Warma, Class of 1935; Laverne "Sandy" Anderson, Class of 1942; Bill Barth, Class of 1946; Don Donato, Class of 1951; and Jack Feltman. After World War II ended many of the players of the late thirties and early forties played together for the local American Legion team, which was very successful.

1951-1976

After belonging to the Cahokia Conference for forty-four years, a new era for Panther athletes began in the 1971-72 school year when O.T.H.S. became a member of the Mississippi Valley Conference. From 1951 through 1976 five sports for boys and four sports for girls were added to the athletic program.

From 1951 through 1976 the Panthers won or shared seven conference championships. During the three-year period 1973 -1976 O'Fallon compiled a record of 72 victories, 12 defeats and one tie including three Regional titles and two Sectional titles.

The 1974 team finished second in the conference, however, the team became the first to advance to the state play-offs by winning the Sectional. O'Fallon won its first game at State but lost in the semi-finals. Their final record was 22-6-1.

The 1976 team won the Conference championship, the Regional and Sectional tournaments. This team also won its first game at state but endured a similar fate as the 1974 team by losing in the semi-finals. Their final record was 27-3. The 1975 team won the Conference and Regional compiling a season record of 23-3. The other Conference winning teams were the 1952, 1954, 1962-63, 1969, and 1972 teams. The 1962-63 school year the conference schedule was played in the fall and spring. On April 12, 1976, Tim Kernan pitched a perfect no-hit game against Jerseyville winning by the score of 8-0.

1976-2000

As the enrollment continued to increase, the athletic program's conference affiliation changed from membership in the Mississippi Valley Conference to the larger and prestigious Southwestern Conference. During the twenty-five year era the number of sports for boys was increased to 11 and 10 for the Lady Panthers.

Conference championships were earned in 1981, 1983, 1984, 1986, 1987, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1997, 1998 and 1999. In 1994 the Panthers made their third trip to the state finals where they lost their first game to Joliet Catholic. During the 1994 season the pitching staff had a string of 49-2/3 innings of no earned runs being scored by the opponents. During the 1966-67 school year the Panthers set a school record of most wins by compiling a record of 36-9-1. The team played in the Fall and Spring. The team record during the Fall of 1966 was 14-5 and the team compiled a record of 22-5-1 during the spring of 1967. The 1982-83 team played only a spring schedule and compiled a record of 31-5 including the longest winning streak of 23 games. On May 3, 1980 O'Fallon defeated Belleville east 10-3 at Busch Stadium. During the 3-year period 1980-83 the baseball team's record was 82-22. The St. Louis Cardinals named Mike Bowen, a three time All-Stater, "Athlete of the Year for 1999" in St. Clair County. Brooks Colvin received All-State recognition for the 2000 season as a shortstop on the O.T.H.S. baseball team.

2001-Present

2001

In 2001 O'Fallon entered its first season as a Member of the Powerful Southwestern Conference finishing with a respectable 9-5 conference record good enough for 3rd place in the eight team conference. The Panthers overall record of 19 and 9 was spearheaded by the all-area pitching performance of senior Derek Stratman. Derek completed his senior campaign with a 10-3 record and finished his career as one of the most successful pitchers in OTHS history compiling a career 21-6 mark.

2002

On May 19th 2002, O'Fallon Panther Baseball Returned to Busch Stadium. The Panthers defeated the Galesburg Silverstreaks 9-1. This victory marked the final victory in Coach Art Voellinger's 12-yr. tenure as the Panther Head Coach. Coach V's Varsity record of 232-113-1 establishes him as the winnigest baseball coach in Panther Baseball History. That figure when added to varsity records in wrestling and boys soccer and tennis, push his personal varsity coaching victories over the 600 mark and leaves him as the winningest varsity coach in OTHS history.

2003

The 2003 Season marked the beginning of a new era for O'Fallon Panther Baseball. Jason Portz took over as head coach and led the Panthers to a 27 win season and a top four seed in the IHSA sectional complex. The 2003 version of the Panther Baseball Team proved to be one of the most successful in the history of the school. This year's team completed the season with 27 wins and 9 defeats, accumulating the most wins by a Panther Baseball team since 1983. Offensively the team established themselves as the most prolific offensive team in the history of O'Fallon Panther Baseball, breaking school records for, most hits (356), runs scored (281), RBI (256), Highest Batting Average (.360), singles (267), doubles (71), and base on balls (158). The team posted a 11-3 record in the highly competitive Southwestern Conference, competing for the conference championship right up till the last conference date of the season, finishing second to Edwardsville (13-1). The conference season was highlighted by a school record five panthers being recognized as 1st team all conference performers. 1st team all conference performers were catcher Jason Cobb (SR), 2nd baseman John Campbell (SR), shortstop Justin Hutto (SR), 3rd Baseman Matt Wicinski (JR), and Centerfielder Kellen Kettwich (SR). Jeff White (SR) was named as a 2nd team outfielder and Ryan Meyler (SR) earned 3rd team pitcher honors respectively. The Illinois High School Baseball Coaches Association named centerfielder Kellen Kettwich as a 1st team all-state selection after completing one of the most successful individual seasons in the history of O'Fallon Panther Baseball. While defensive specialist, John Campbell. was rewarded for being one of the finest middle infielders in the state of Illinois, by being selected as a 3rd team all-state selection by the Chicago Tribune.

2004

The 2004 Panther Baseball season is one that can be best described as roller coaster ride. This year's team ended the season with 23 wins and 12 defeats, accumulating the 2nd most wins by a Panther Baseball team in seventeen years, second only to last years 27 victories. The team advanced to the regional final, where they were defeated by Triad 8-7. Offensively the team established themselves as one of the best teams in school history, setting single season records for highest batting average (.361) and singles (289). While along the way accumulating top five finishes in hits (355), runs scored (270), RBI (242), doubles (53), homeruns (14), base on balls (147), and stolen bases (94). On the mound the team posted a respectable 3.75 ERA, while playing solid defense along the way. The team posted a 9-5 record in the competitive Southwestern Conference, good for a 3rd place finish. The conference season was highlighted by a school record five Panthers being recognized as 1st team all conference performers. 1st team all conference selections were; catcher Danny Kruep (Sr.), Second baseman Matt Wicinski (Sr.), Third baseman Chris Steiber (Sr.), Outfielder Nick Quintal (Sr.) and Designated Hitter Chris Kellermann (Jr.). Brian Gass (So.) was named as a 2nd team pitcher, while Jordan Colvin (So.), shortstop, and Dan Thouvenot (Sr.), outfielder, were named to the 3rd team respectively. Nick Quintal was rewarded for his outstanding efforts by being named 1st team all metro by the St. Louis Post Dispatch. Nick is the first Panther to hold this distinction since Mike Bowen in 1998. Nick put together one of the finest offensive seasons in Panther history, batting .473 with 53 hits, earning him the distinction of the OTHS single season hits leader. The Illinois Coaches Association brought a conclusion to Matt Wicinski's fine career by naming him a 1st team all state infielder after concluding one of the finest careers of any player in Panther Baseball History.

2005

The 2005 Panther Baseball season was a great year of development and accomplishment that was highlighted by great senior leadership and outstanding role playing by all those involved with this year's team. This year's team ended the season with 28 wins and 9 defeats, and 1 tie, accumulating the 2nd most wins by a Panther Baseball team in eighteen years and bringing OTHS its first IHSA Regional Championship in Baseball since 1994, defeating Edwardsville 14-4 in the Edwardsville Regional Final and eventually loosing to Belleville West 4-0 in the Collinsville Sectional Semi-Final. Offensively the team established themselves as the top offensive team in school history, setting single season records for highest batting average (.365), runs scored (354), hits (395), runs batted in (314), doubles (86), and base on balls (174), while along the way accumulating top five finishes in singles (280), homeruns (21), and stolen bases (91). On the mound the team posted a much improved 3.24 ERA, while playing solid defense along the way, contributing to much of the success of the team.

The team posted a 9-5 record in the competitive Southwestern Conference, good for a 3rd place finish. The conference season was highlighted by a school record nine Panthers being recognized as all conference performers. 1st team all conference selections were; catcher/1st baseman Tyler Harris (Jr.) and Pitcher Brian Gass (Jr.). 3rd Baseman Chris Gottschall (Sr.), 2nd Baseman Ben Larimer (Sr.) and Outfielder Caleb Dziurdzy (Jr.) were rewarded for their outstanding conference seasons by being named to the 2nd Team. Outfielders LJ Watson (Jr.) and Zach McCarter (Jr.), Shortstop Jordan Colvin (Jr.) and Pitcher Daniel Gebert (Sr.) were named to the 3rd team respectively.

Brian Gass earned his 10th victory of the year in the regional final to become the first panther pitcher to win 10 games in a season since 1976. The Illinois Coaches Association rewarded seniors Chris Gottschall and Ben Larimer by selecting them to compete in the ICA senior All-Star game in Peoria.

2006

The 2006 OTHS Baseball season was not one that will soon be forgotten by local sports enthusiasts, and one that will always be remembered by those who were along for the ride. Referred to by most as the greatest baseball team in OTHS baseball history, the 2006 version of panther baseball became the 1st team of any sport to bring home an IHSA state tournament trophy, and the first OTHS baseball team to capture the Southwestern Conference Championship (10-4) finishing with a school record 35 wins and 7 defeats. Along O'Fallon's post season ride were victories over Mater Dei (14-9), Triad (5-1 – Regional Championship), Belleville Althoff (10-5), Edwardsville (16-5 – Sectional Championship), Springfield Sacred Heart Griffin (6-4 – Super Sectional Championship), and the states # 1 ranked team, Lyons Township (2-1) in the IHSA state quarterfinals. The Panthers fell 2-1 to Chicago St. Patrick in the IHSA state semifinals, and had to settle for a share of 3rd place after the 3rd place game was cancelled due to rain. Offensively the Panthers established new school records in nearly every offensive category, including hits (448), runs (368), RBI (333), Batting Average (.392), Singles (296), doubles (106), homeruns (37), and walks (199). On the mound the panthers sported two 10 game winners, Brian Gass (10-1, 1.60 ERA) and his brother Brandon Gass (10-1, 3.39 ERA). Jeremy Pope had an outstanding season as the teams #2 starter going 9-3 with a 2.74 ERA. As a team the panthers posted a 2.84 ERA. Nine Panthers earned All Southwestern Conference Recognition, 1st Team selections were, Jordan Colvin (SS), Brian Gass (P), Tyler Harris (C), Caleb Dziurdzy (OF), and LJ Watson (OF). Jeremy Pope (P) was selected to the second team, and Zach McCarter (OF), Mark Daniels (DH), and Jesse Schmidt (3B) were selected to the 3rd team respectively.

Brian Gass, Caleb Dziurdzy, and Tyler Harris were named to the prestigious St. Louis Post-Dispatch All-Metro Team. Brian became the first player in the history of Panther Baseball to be selected as the "Player of the Year" for the St. Louis Post Dispatch, and the Belleville News Democrat. Brian was also selected as a member of the Chicago Tribune All-State team, while Tyler Harris was selected as a 1st Team member of the Illinois Baseball Coaches Association All-State Team. Coach Jason Portz earned his 100th coaching victory in 3+ years with a 20-0 victory over E.St. Louis, and was later name as the IBCA Southern Illinois Coach of the Year.